**Critical Child and Youth Studies (Psych 80103)**

Roger Hart

Fall 2016

Wednesdays 4.15 – 6.15pm

This seminar offers an introduction to how childhood and youth is investigated across the different disciplines of the social sciences and the humanities. Beginning with the recognition that concepts of childhood and adolescence are socially constructed and vary across culture and historical periods, we will examine how our shifting conceptions of childhood both align and clash with the way children actually live. This will include childhood experiences that challenge the historically recent notions of a “protected” and “innocent” childhood and such issues as child sex, child labor, child soldiers and child criminals. We will examine how different institutions, discourses and systems shape how childhood is experienced: including family, school, the juvenile (in)justice system, media and consumer culture. But while attending to the force of structural inequalities in cultural and economic arrangements, we will not risk rendering children passive or invisible; we will recognize the methodological strides that have been made in recent years by researchers in working *with* rather than on or about children.